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# Regional cooperation in the economic, social and related fields

## Report of the Secretary-General

**Addendum**

## Matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council or brought to its attention: Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

*Summary*

The present addendum to the report of the Secretary-General on regional cooperation in the economic, social and related fields contains information on resolutions adopted at the seventieth session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, held in Bangkok in two phases, on 23 May and from 4 to 8 August 2014, and the twenty-eighth session of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, held in Tunis from 15 to 18 September 2014. The full texts of all the resolutions can be accessed at www.unescap.org/commission/documents and www.regionalcommissions.org/?p=991, respectively.

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# Contents


| | | Page |
|---|---|---|
| I. | Matters calling for action by the Council | 3 |
| | Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia | 3 |
| II. | Matters brought to the attention of the Council | 7 |
| | A. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific | 7 |
| | B. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia | 13 |

# I. Matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council

## Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

1. At its twenty-eighth session, held in Tunis from 15 to 18 September 2014, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia adopted resolutions 315 (XXVIII) and 320 (XXVIII), on the basis of which the following draft resolutions are submitted for action by the Economic and Social Council.

**Draft resolution I**[1]

**Establishment of an intergovernmental committee on technology for development in the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia**

*The Economic and Social Council,*

*Noting* the adoption by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia at its twenty-eighth session of resolution 315 (XXVIII),

*Endorses* the establishment of the Intergovernmental Committee on Technology for Development in the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, as set out in Commission resolution 315 (XXVIII), the text of which is annexed to the present resolution.

**Annex**

**Resolution 315 (XXVIII)**

**Establishment of an intergovernmental committee on technology for development**

*The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,*

*Referring* to the 2005 World Summit Outcome in which the States Members of the United Nations recognized that science and technology, including information and communications technology, are vital for the achievement of the development goals; and to Economic and Social Council resolution 2004/68 of 5 November 2004 on science and technology for development,

*Referring also* to the outcome of the two phases of the World Summit on the Information Society, held in Geneva in 2003 and in Tunis in 2005, in particular the Tunis Agenda on the Information Society and the international mechanisms and forums it generated,

*Referring further* to goal 8 of the Millennium Development Goals, which includes a target on making available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications technology,

*Recognizing* the importance of increasing the participation of the Governments of States members of the Commission in identifying priorities and planning and improving the Commission's programme of work in the field of technology for development,

[1] An oral statement of programme budget implications will be read by the Secretariat in conjunction with the present resolution.

*Recognizing also* the need to enhance coordination and integration between the Commission and Arab regional organizations regarding technology-for-development policies and programmes, to meet the needs of member States and develop such technology to achieve inclusive development in the Arab region,

*Taking into consideration* the recommendations resulting from the evaluation undertaken by the Commission of its working mechanisms, including a proposal to establish a committee on technology for development,

*Stressing* the important role of the Commission in promoting information and communications technology sectors and related industries and enhancing their role in development, the information society and the digital economy in member States and linking them to the international process of the World Summit on the Information Society and the mechanisms and international forums it generated for Internet governance; and invigorating the role of member States at the international level in those international forums,

*Stressing also* the important role of the Commission's Technology Centre in the fields of science and technology and in networking scientific and technological research with major economic sectors in member States,

*Taking into consideration* the efforts undertaken by the Commission under subprogramme 4, Information and communications technology for regional integration, and its achievements in that field in advancing the information and communications technology sector and scientific and technological research,

*Guided* by the work of other United Nations regional commissions regarding the establishment of specialized committees on technology for development,

1. *Endorses* changing the name of subprogramme 4, from "Information and communications technology for regional integration" to "Technology for development and regional integration";

2. *Decides* to establish an intergovernmental committee to be named the Committee on Technology for Development, comprising representatives from States members of the Commission with experience in the field, which would replace the Consultative Committee on Scientific and Technological Development and Technological Innovation, use the resources allocated to it and undertake the following:

(a) Identifying priorities of the Commission's programme of work and medium-term plans regarding technology for development, including scientific research and innovation, the digital economy and the information society, knowledge economies and emerging areas;

(b) Monitoring the progress achieved in the field of technology, including information and communications technology, Internet governance, the digital economy and the information society on the one hand, and areas related to scientific research and transfer of technology on the other hand; and formulating recommendations to strengthen the development of those fields;

(c) Following up regional and international processes, conferences and forums relevant to subprogramme 4, and coordinating regional efforts to implement decisions and recommendations of those conferences;

(d) Supporting the secretariat in continuing to follow up the implementation of the Tunis Agenda on the Information Society adopted by the World Summit on the Information Society and participating in the activities and projects related to the World Summit beyond 2015;

(e) Advancing the work of the secretariat in supporting cooperation with the ministerial councils and the organizations and unions of the League of Arab States, including the Council of Arab Ministers of Communications and Information Technology, the Arab Administrative Development Organization and other specialized organizations, in harmonizing policies and strategies, supporting communication and partnerships and coordinating positions at the international level in addition to building capacities;

3. *Also decides* that the Committee shall hold its sessions once every two years, with effect from 2016;

4. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to submit a report on the implementation of the present resolution to the Commission at its twenty-ninth session.

**Draft resolution II**
**Redesignation of the Technical Committee of the Economic Commission for Western Asia as the Executive Committee and amendment of its terms of reference**

*The Economic and Social Council,*

*Noting* the adoption by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia at its twenty-eighth session of resolution 320 (XXVIII),

*Endorses* the redesignation of the Technical Committee as the Executive Committee and the amendment of its terms of reference as set out in resolution 320 (XXVIII), the text of which is annexed to the present resolution.

**Annex**

**Resolution 320 (XXVIII)**
**Redesignation of the Technical Committee as the Executive Committee and amendment of its terms of reference**

*The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,*

*Referring* to its decision of 11 May 2006 concerning the establishment of a technical committee that would meet once every six months to follow up the implementation of the programme of work,[2]

*Referring also* to the terms of reference of the Technical Committee, as revised at its fifth meeting, held on 6 and 7 April 2011, which stipulate that the Technical Committee shall hold three meetings per biennium, in support of the ministerial session of the Commission, to advise and assist the secretariat in planning and implementing the programme of work and to take action on any other matters,

[2] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2006, Supplement No. 21* (E/2006/41-E/ESCWA/24/10), para. 49.

*Having considered* the recommendation of the Technical Committee at its seventh meeting to amend the mandate of the Committee in order to facilitate its work and strengthen its ability to take decisions and respond to regional and international developments,

*Having also considered* the recommendation of the Technical Committee at its eighth meeting to redesignate the Committee as the Executive Committee and amend its terms of reference, so that it may play a greater role in steering and coordinating the activities of the Commission,

*Noting* the increasing global and regional challenges and the need to develop swift regional responses to them,

*Underscoring* the importance of strengthening the intergovernmental engagement of member States in the decision-making processes of the Commission, in particular to ensure an integrated approach to the work of the Commission,

1. *Decides* to redesignate the Technical Committee as the Executive Committee;

2. *Also decides* to revise the role of the Technical Committee and its terms of reference, with immediate effect, as set out in the annex to the present resolution;

3. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to follow up on the implementation of the present resolution.

**Annex to resolution 320 (XXVIII)**
**Terms of reference of the Executive Committee**

1. The Executive Committee shall submit a report on its activities to the Commission at its sessions.

2. The Executive Committee shall convene three meetings in the period between the biennial sessions of the Commission.

3. The Executive Committee shall be entrusted with submitting resolutions and reports to the Economic and Social Council on matters excluding the terms of reference of the Commission.

4. The Executive Committee shall undertake the following:

(a) Organize the sessions of the Commission;

(b) Review and adopt the programme of work of the subsidiary committees on the basis of criteria defined by the Executive Committee;

(c) Ensure consistency between subprogrammes;

(d) Deal with all matters related to programme planning.

5. The membership of the Executive Committee shall mirror that of the Commission.

6. The Chairs or Vice-Chairs of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission can be invited to the meetings of the Executive Committee.

7. The Executive Committee may propose amendments to its terms of reference, which shall be considered for adoption by the Commission.

8. The Executive Committee shall be chaired by a representative of the country chairing the Commission.

# II. Matters brought to the attention of the Council

## A. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

2. At its seventieth session, held in two phases at the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok on 23 May and from 4 to 8 August 2014, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) adopted a number of resolutions which are hereby brought to the attention of the Economic and Social Council. The full text of the resolutions can be accessed at www.unescap.org/commission/documents.

**Implementation of the Bangkok Declaration on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific (resolution 70/1)**

3. The Commission endorsed the Bangkok Declaration on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific and requested the Executive Secretary to accord priority to its implementation and to assist members and associate members in setting up and supporting the work of the four area-specific expert working groups in accordance with section II, paragraphs 3 and 6 (b), of the Bangkok Declaration.

4. The Commission also requested the Executive Secretary to convene in 2015 the intergovernmental open-ended preparatory meetings for the second Ministerial Conference on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific and to convene the second Ministerial Conference in 2015 to review progress on the agenda for regional economic integration outlined in the Bangkok Declaration. The Commission further requested the Executive Secretary to consider the recommendations of the intergovernmental open-ended preparatory meetings and decide on follow-up actions, as expressed in the Bangkok Declaration, and to report to the Commission at its seventy-first and seventy-second sessions.

**Disaster-related statistics in Asia and the Pacific (resolution 70/2)**

5. The Commission invited members and associate members, in collaboration with partners, to build and assess their resilience to and capacity to deal with disasters through, among other measures, the improvement of disaster-related statistics, and decided to establish an expert group comprising statisticians and disaster risk reduction experts to work towards developing a basic range of disaster-related statistics to be approved by the Commission.

6. The Commission requested the Executive Secretary to support the work of the expert group and to inform the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction of the work initiated by ESCAP towards developing a basic range of disaster-related statistics and to report to the Commission at its seventy-second session on the implementation of the resolution.

**Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 in Asia and the Pacific (resolution 70/3)**

7. The Commission urged countries in the region and international and regional organizations to accelerate the implementation, as appropriate, of the recommendations contained in the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 (Istanbul Programme of Action) and the Regional Road Map for Implementing the Istanbul Programme of Action in the Asian and Pacific Region for the Decade 2011-2020 in particular, and to participate actively in the Asia-Pacific regional high-level policy dialogue on the Istanbul Programme of Action.

8. The Commission requested the Executive Secretary to organize the Asia-Pacific regional high-level policy dialogue on the Istanbul Programme of Action in early 2015; to assist the Asia-Pacific least developed countries in implementing the Regional Road Map; to continue to assist Asia-Pacific least developed countries in achieving other internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals; and to submit to the Commission at its seventy-first session, a report on the progress achieved in the implementation of the resolution.

**Promoting sustainable agricultural development in Asia and the Pacific through technology transfer (resolution 70/4)**

9. The Commission, inter alia, called on all members and associate members to make greater efforts to introduce, adapt, develop and disseminate appropriate and cost-effective sustainable agricultural technologies to enable poor rural women, men and youth to increase sustainable agricultural productivity and improve rural livelihoods and to include sustainable agricultural development as an integral part of their national policies and strategies, and to formulate and implement national sustainable agricultural development strategies and/or plans, as appropriate.

10. The Commission requested the Executive Secretary, in collaboration with United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, international financial institutions, development banks and donor countries, to continue supporting knowledge- and information-sharing and capacity development for member States to pursue sustainable agricultural development; to continue to assist members and associate members in undertaking North-South cooperation, South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation to facilitate and expedite technology transfer on mutually agreed terms and the uptake of socially, economically and environmentally sustainable technologies; and to continue to support and facilitate regional cooperation in the innovation, development and application of sustainable agricultural technologies, including technologies for agricultural mechanization, and the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources in order to achieve intensification of sustainable food and agricultural production and to reduce rural poverty.

**Strengthening regional cooperation and capacity for enhanced trade and investment in support of sustainable development (resolution 70/5)**

11. The Commission, inter alia, encouraged member States to strengthen national and regional initiatives, programmes, projects and other efforts to promote sustainable development of the Asia-Pacific region through enhanced trade and investment and, wherever appropriate, to endeavour to strengthen regional

cooperation among member States, the United Nations development system and other development partners in promoting sustainable development through enhanced trade and investment.

12. The Commission requested the Executive Secretary to study the feasibility of convening every four years, starting in 2016, a conference at the ministerial level to review recent developments and adopt regional action plans in the area of trade and investment and other related areas for implementation by Governments of Commission members and associate members and by the secretariat of the Commission, and to submit to the Committee on Trade and Investment at its next session a report with recommendations on the convening of a ministerial-level conference.

**Implementation of the decision of the Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Meeting on a Regional Arrangement for the Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade (resolution 70/6)**

13. Noting the holding of the Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Meeting on a Regional Arrangement for the Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Bangkok from 22 to 24 April 2014, the Commission endorsed the recommendation of the Meeting to establish an interim intergovernmental steering group on cross-border paperless trade facilitation, and requested the Executive Secretary to support and facilitate the establishment and operation of the steering group and to report to the Commission annually on the progress made in the implementation of the resolution until the work of the steering group had been completed.

**Implementation of the Suva Declaration on Improving Maritime Transport and Related Services in the Pacific (resolution 70/7)**

14. Welcoming the successful outcome of the High-level Meeting on Strengthening Inter-island Shipping and Logistics in the Pacific Island Countries, held in Suva from 23 to 25 July 2013, the Commission, inter alia, endorsed the Suva Declaration on Improving Maritime Transport and Related Services in the Pacific, and requested the Executive Secretary to accord priority to the implementation of the Suva Declaration and to report to the Commission at its seventy-third and seventy-fifth sessions on the implementation of the resolution.

**Implementation of the Ministerial Declaration on Transport as a Key to Sustainable Development and Regional Integration (resolution 70/8)**

15. Welcoming the successful outcome of the Forum of Asian Minsters of Transport, held in Bangkok from 4 to 8 November 2013, the Commission endorsed the Ministerial Declaration on Transport as a Key to Sustainable Development and Regional Integration, and requested the Executive Secretary to assist members and associate members in the implementation of the Ministerial Declaration, in collaboration with other United Nations and specialized multilateral agencies, relevant subregional organizations, international and regional financing institutions, multilateral and bilateral donors and the private sector, and to report to the Commission at its seventy-third session on the implementation of the resolution.

**Implementation of the outcomes of the first Asian and Pacific Energy Forum (resolution 70/9)**

16. The Commission, inter alia, endorsed the outcomes of the first Asian and Pacific Energy Forum, namely, the Ministerial Declaration on Regional Cooperation for Enhanced Energy Security and the Sustainable Use of Energy in Asia and the Pacific: Shaping the Future of Sustainable Energy in Asia and the Pacific and the Plan of Action on Regional Cooperation for Enhanced Energy Security and the Sustainable Use of Energy in Asia and the Pacific, 2014-2018, as contained in the annexes to the resolution, and decided to convene the second Asian and Pacific Energy Forum at the ministerial level in 2018.

17. The Commission requested the Executive Secretary to accord priority to the implementation of the Ministerial Declaration and the Plan of Action, to undertake a periodic review of the progress made in the implementation of the Plan of Action, to begin the necessary preparatory work for the second Asian and Pacific Energy Forum in a timely manner and to report to the Commission at its seventy-third session on progress made in the implementation of the resolution.

**Implementation of the Bangkok Declaration of the Asia-Pacific region on the United Nations Development Agenda beyond 2015 (resolution 70/10)**

18. Taking note of the inaugural session of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development, held in Pattaya, Thailand, from 19 to 21 May 2014, during which participants discussed Asia-Pacific perspectives on sustainable development, the Commission, inter alia, requested the Executive Secretary to continue to promote balanced integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development and to support the work of member States, upon request, on all dimensions of sustainable development, including through greater exchange of information, knowledge and experience, best practices and lessons learned.

**Implementing the outcome of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (resolution 70/11)**

19. Welcoming the inaugural session of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development, held in Pattaya, Thailand, from 19 to 21 May 2014, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to launch an intergovernmental consultative process, within the broad framework of General Assembly resolution 66/290, to determine the future architecture of the Forum, including its mandate, scope of work and other procedural aspects, and to submit a report on those matters to the Commission at its seventy-first session.

20. The Commission also requested the Executive Secretary to convene, without prejudice to the outcome of the intergovernmental consultative process, the second session of the Forum back-to-back with the seventy-first session of the Commission and to conduct a study on and analysis of the programmatic, organizational and budgetary implications of constituting a new committee on science, technology and innovation and a new committee on financing for development.

**Strengthening efforts on human settlements and sustainable urban development for the Asia-Pacific region (resolution 70/12)**

21. Acknowledging the important contribution of ESCAP in promoting regional cooperation on inclusive and sustainable urbanization and urban poverty reduction in the Asia-Pacific region through its normative and analytical work, the Commission, inter alia, requested the Executive Secretary, in collaboration with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme and other concerned bodies and agencies, to continue to analyse conditions and trends regarding human settlements and sustainable urban development in Asia and the Pacific across all three dimensions of sustainable development, as well as identify strategies to address persistent and emerging challenges.

22. The Commission also requested the Executive Secretary to continue to facilitate regional understanding and action on issues critical to housing and sustainable urban development through, among other modalities, sharing of good practices and lessons learned, and the convening of expert group meetings on regional multi-stakeholder dialogues, including the Asia-Pacific Urban Forum. The Commission further requested the Executive Secretary, in collaboration with United Nations Human Settlements Programme and other concerned bodies and agencies, to organize the sixth Asia-Pacific Urban Forum back-to-back with the high-level regional preparatory meeting in Indonesia in 2015 in order to provide substantive input to its deliberations and to support the Government of Indonesia in the regional preparations for the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), in particular by organizing the high-level regional preparatory meeting in 2015 with the participation of member States as an intergovernmental process and the involvement of other stakeholders.

**Regional cooperation for building resilience to disasters in Asia and the Pacific (resolution 70/13)**

23. The Commission, inter alia, welcomed the convening of the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, Japan, from 14 to 18 March 2015, which will review the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action and adopt a global framework for disaster risk reduction beyond 2015. The Commission invited members and associate members, as appropriate, inter alia, to (a) enhance their efforts to build resilience to natural disasters; (b) take strategic approaches towards "build back better"; (c) take strategic approaches towards evidence-based resilience through improved disaster data; (d) ensure all vulnerable people were included in disaster risk reduction planning, based on the concept of human security in accordance with General Assembly resolution 66/290; and (e) consider contributing to the ESCAP Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness in Indian Ocean and Southeast Asian Countries. It requested the Executive Secretary, in collaboration with partners, to further strengthen regional space cooperation on disaster risk reduction, including the applications of space technology and geographic information systems, by enhancing the Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development and its education and training networks.

24. The Commission also requested the Executive Secretary to facilitate the mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction into development planning, as appropriate, including through information-sharing and building the capacity of member States;

to promote the sharing of knowledge, technology and skills in disaster risk reduction among member States through South-South cooperation, North-South cooperation and triangular cooperation; and to continue analytical work as well as sharing of best practices on building the resilience of member States to disasters, in collaboration with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and other organizations involved in disaster risk reduction, including through the *Asia-Pacific Disaster Report*.

25. The Commission further requested the Executive Secretary to support and facilitate the extension and operationalization of the Regional Cooperative Mechanism for Drought Monitoring and Early Warning in drought-prone countries in the region; to promote private sector engagement in disaster risk reduction, such as through public-private partnerships and the sharing of experiences in the region in engaging the private sector more effectively in disaster risk reduction, including through the ESCAP Business Advisory Council; and to further enhance partnerships and collaboration in disaster risk reduction with regional organizations in Asia and the Pacific, including the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, building on the efforts of the Regional Coordination Mechanism and its Thematic Working Group on the Environment and Disaster Risk Management to implement the One United Nations initiative.

**Enhancing participation of youth in sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific (resolution 70/14)**

26. Noting the progress made by several member States to better integrate young people into their policy agenda, the Commission called upon all members and associate members to (a) accord higher priority to investing in youth so that the implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth could be accelerated; (b) promote meaningful participation of youth and the realization of their right to enhance their capacity in order to more effectively achieve inclusive and sustainable development; (c) ensure young people's access to a comprehensive range of affordable, effective, safe and sustainable health services; (d) ensure access to good-quality formal and non-formal education in order to enable young people to acquire relevant skills and build their employment and entrepreneurial capacities; (e) enhance school-to-work transitions and increase decent work opportunities for youth through vocational training and other policies and programmes to integrate youth into sustainable labour markets; and (f) eliminate all forms of gender-based discrimination against young people.

27. The Commission requested the Executive Secretary, inter alia, to (a) undertake a comprehensive analytical study on the need for youth inclusion and its relationship to sustainable development as a basis for evidence-based policies; (b) enhance the role of ESCAP as a regional platform for sharing experiences and good practices on youth policies and participation; (c) encourage the participation of key stakeholders, including youth-led organizations, other civil society organizations and the private sector, in supporting national and regional efforts to address challenges impeding youth development, including the convening of an intergovernmental meeting to bring such stakeholders together to assess progress made in meeting international commitments and enhancing youth development.

## B. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

28. At its twenty-eighth session, held in Tunis from 15 to 18 September 2014, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) adopted the Tunis Declaration on Social Justice in the Arab Region and a number of resolutions on the programme of work of ESCWA, summaries of which are set out below. The full texts of the Declaration and the resolutions can be accessed at www.regionalcommissions.org/?p=991.

### Tunis Declaration on Social Justice in the Arab Region

29. The Commission, inter alia, committed to social justice as a core value of the Arab and Islamic culture and a foundation for secure, cohesive and prosperous societies and striving to achieve equality and equity in member countries, eradicating poverty, securing environmental sustainability and building partnerships for development, as enshrined in international treaties and declarations. It noted with extreme concern the daunting challenges that the Arab region was facing in all aspects of human development and reaffirmed the importance of addressing threats to social cohesion and combating water scarcity, food and water insecurity, environmental pollution, climate change and the increasing debt of poor Arab countries.

30. The Commission expressed deep alarm at escalating conflicts and the continuous loss of lives, livelihoods and resources. It strongly condemned the Israeli military offensives targeting Palestinian civilians and infrastructure, and the latest attack on the Gaza Strip in July and August 2014.

31. Referring to the 2012-2016 action plan of the League of Arab States and the Amman Declaration on Priorities of the Arab Region for Inclusive and Sustainable Development Post-2015, the Commission commended the efforts and progress made in ratifying relevant human rights treaties and instruments, in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and in participating in global processes leading to the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda. It affirmed the commitment of Arab States to advancing youth development, especially for those with special needs, and stressed the urgent need to overcome the obstacles to youth economic and social empowerment. It also affirmed the need to develop policies, establish mechanisms to combat violence against women and undertake special measures to increase women's effective participation in decision-making.

32. The Commission stressed the crucial role of sound macroeconomic policies in advancing the mutually reinforcing objectives of social justice and inclusive development and committed to reducing unemployment, developing productive sectors, addressing the mismatch between educational outcomes and the needs of the labour market and improving economic governance systems. It recognized the importance of promoting participatory mechanisms that strengthen the role of civil society institutions and other stakeholders in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of sustainable development policies, especially social protection policies.

33. The Commission requested the secretariat to incorporate the elements of social justice in its work on the preparation, monitoring and implementation of a post-2015 development agenda and sustainable development goals and establish clear implementation and monitoring mechanisms to ensure the achievement of national,

regional and global development goals, and to strengthen the policy capacity of member States in all relevant fields through training, research and normative work.

34. It requested the secretariat to monitor the effects of the Israeli occupation of Palestine, its implications in the light of regional and international developments and its detrimental impact on the attainment of the multiple dimensions of justice in Palestine and the region as a whole; and to create a measurement tool to monitor progress in the area of social justice in the Arab region and strengthen the capacity of member States and statistical agencies to collect, build, analyse and disseminate harmonized related indicators.

**The Arab Forum on Sustainable Development (resolution 314 (XXVIII))**[1]

35. The Commission encouraged its member States to actively participate in intergovernmental negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda and sustainable development goals and in the upcoming annual sessions of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. It invited member States to widely participate in the sessions of the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development and achieve a balanced representation of governmental organizations in the Forum.

36. The Commission requested the secretariat to hold sessions of the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development periodically, with the participation of the League of Arab States and other organizations concerned with sustainable development, in order to prepare for the High-level Political Forum, review the progress made in achieving the sustainable development goals and contribute to launching regional partnerships to advance sustainable development in the Arab region.

37. The Commission also requested the secretariat to monitor progress in achieving sustainable development in the Arab region and to prepare reports on the topic on the basis of official data for presentation at the sessions of the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development, and requested the Executive Secretary to present a report, at its twenty-ninth session, on the procedures undertaken to implement the resolution.

**Support for the Palestinian people (resolution 316 (XXVIII))**[1]

38. The Commission, inter alia, welcomed General Assembly resolution 67/19, in which the Assembly accorded to Palestine the status of non-member observer State in the United Nations, and Assembly resolution 68/12, in which the Assembly proclaimed 2014 the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People; called on the international community to support the Government of National Conciliation, which was formed in accordance with the Palestinian National Reconciliation achieved in May 2014, asserting the unity of the Palestinian people; and condemned in the strongest terms the Israeli assault on the Gaza Strip, and stressed that targeting civilians and their houses and infrastructure, as was seen in Gaza, constituted further violation of international humanitarian law, which emphasizes the need to hold Israel accountable for those crimes.

39. It also condemned the practices and policies of the Israeli occupation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which cause a continuous deterioration of the economic and social conditions of Palestinian people and violate their collective and individual rights; and called upon member States to raise the level of their support for the Palestinian people in their efforts to obtain their full rights, to put an end to

Israeli violations of their rights and of international law, to end the Israeli occupation and to establish an independent Palestinian State in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions.

40. The Commission requested the ESCWA secretariat to raise the level of its support for the Palestinian people and their institutions at all levels, providing normative and technical assistance to Palestinian institutions; submitting periodic reports to the ministerial sessions of the Commission on the practices of the Israeli occupation that violate the economic and social rights of the Palestinian people; mobilizing regional partners to support the Palestinian people and their institutions in Palestine and abroad, assisting them in achieving development and exerting pressure and advocacy to help them obtain their full rights, as guaranteed by United Nations resolutions and international conventions and charters. The Commission requested the Executive Secretary to follow up on the implementation of the resolution and report on progress made in that regard to the Commission at its twenty-ninth session.

**Adoption of the draft strategic framework for the biennium 2016-2017 (resolution 317 (XXVIII))**

41. The Commission, having considered the revised draft strategic framework for the biennium 2016-2017, adopted the draft strategic framework and requested the secretariat to distribute it in the form adopted by member States.

**Adoption of session reports of the subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (resolution 318 (XXVIII))**

42. The Commission, affirming the importance of the role played by its subsidiary bodies in designing, coordinating and following up its programme of work in their respective domains and of upholding the best interests of member States, adopted the recommendations contained in the reports of the subsidiary bodies with the amendments agreed on during the twenty-eighth session of the Commission; requested the secretariat to prepare a paper on the reasons and justifications for the requests concerning annual meetings of the sessions of the Statistical Committee, the Committee on Water Resources and the Committee on Energy; and called upon member States to implement measures to ensure that the amended recommendations are put into effect.

**Adoption of the proposed amendments to the programme of work for the biennium 2014-2015 (resolution 319 (XXVIII))**

43. The Commission, taking note of the progress made in 2014 in implementing the programme of work for the biennium 2014-2015, adopted the amendments introduced to the programme of work, with consideration given to the remarks made by member States during the twenty-eighth session, and requested the secretariat to follow up the implementation of the programme of work and, if necessary, to include activities to address any challenge that may emerge in the Arab region.